

HOW MANY TETHYAN TRIASSIC OCEANS?

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In recent years the number of independent oceanic basins within the Western Tethys has considerably increased. From an originally single Western Tethys ocean (LAUBSCHER 1971, BERNOULLI & LAUBSCHER 1972), especially STAMPFLI and collaborators (STAMPFLI et al. 1991, 1999, STAMPFLI & KOZUR 2006, STAMPFLI in MOIX et al. 2008) have introduced a system of at least four, more or less parallel E-W directed oceanic basins with intermediate small ribbon-continental blocks. These from Ladinian time onward existing oceans are from north to south the Meliata-, Maliac-, Pindos- and Neotethys oceans and are described to represent highly individual Triassic histories in space and time.

Starting from critical key areas for this concept we discuss its strength as well weakness and its reliability. Based on facial and tectonic considerations we see no reasons for this multiple splitting of the oceanic Western Tethys end and present arguments for combining at least the Meliata- and the Maliac ocean as well as the Pindos- and the Neotethys ocean into single oceans. Following the concept of SCHMID et al. (2008) and GAWLICK et al. (2008) for a far distance westward transport of the Pindos ophiolites in combination with their later complicated deformational history in their present place, (VAMVAKA et al. 2006), all western Tethys remnants of oceanic crust would fit in a single ocean paleogeography as classically supposed.

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